

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS  
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1715  
ANSWERED ON:14.03.2005  
POPULATION OF ELEPHANTS  
Kurup Adv. Suresh

**Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:**

- (a) whether there has been a decrease in the number of tusker elephants in Indian forests for the last five years;
- (b) if so, the details thereof, State-wise;
- (c) the reasons for the same;
- (d) the male-female proportion of elephants in Indian forests;
- (e) whether the Government has conducted any study on the decreasing number of elephants;
- (f) if so, the details thereof; and
- (g) the steps taken to save the elephants?

**Answer**

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA)

(a) The estimated population of elephants (including tuskers) in the country has shown an increase from 25,877 in 1997 to 26,413 in 2002 when the last census was carried out. However, some decrease in elephant population has been reported from some States.

(b) The States showing decrease in elephant population are as follows:

| STATE             | ESTIMATED NUMBER |      |
|-------------------|------------------|------|
|                   | 1997             | 2002 |
| Arunachal Pradesh | 1800             | 1607 |
| Assam             | 5312             | 5246 |
| Nagaland          | 158              | 145  |
| Manipur           | 30               | 12   |
| Tripura           | 70               | 40   |
| Karnataka         | 6088             | 5838 |

(c) The decrease in the elephant population in the north-eastern States is attributed to loss of elephant habitat, illegal hunting, human-elephant conflict, etc. Insurgency and the traditional hunting practised by many tribes in the north-eastern States is also believed to have contributed to decrease in elephant population. The apparent decrease in the elephant population in Karnataka is on account of refinement in the census methodology.

(d) Information received from some states about the male-female ratio in the adult elephant population as gathered during the last elephant census (2002) is as follows:

|                     |          |
|---------------------|----------|
| Assam               | - 1:1.95 |
| Meghalaya           | - 1:4.5  |
| West Bengal (North) | - 1:1.34 |
| Orissa              | - 1:2.78 |
| Uttaranchal         | - 1:1.87 |
| Karnataka           | - 1:3.44 |

(e)&(f) The elephant population in the country is monitored through periodic census. A special monitoring programme called MIKE (Monitoring of Illegal Killing of Elephants) has been initiated in 10 elephant reserves in the country, viz., Shiwalik (Uttaranchal), Mayurbhanj (Orissa), Eastern Dooars (W. Bengal), Chirang-Ripu and Dehing-Patkai (Assam), Deomali (Arunachal Pradesh), Garo Hills (Meghalaya), Mysore (Karnataka), Nilgiri (Tamilnadu) and Wayanad (Kerala)

(g) Elephants have been included in Schedule- I of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 which prohibits their hunting and also trade in ivory. Export of ivory from the country is also banned. India is a signatory to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) which prohibits international trade in ivory and other elephant products. Government of India provides financial assistance under Project Elephant to major elephant –bearing states in the country for protection of elephants and their habitats and also for mitigating human – elephant conflict. An amount of Rs 13.34 Cr has been released under the Project during the current financial year. 24 Elephant Reserves have been notified in the country for the systematic and focused management of the elephants. Government of India has also empowered the C.B.I. under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 to apprehend and prosecute wildlife offenders.